

A Register Based Evaluation of Website Translations of Euronews Political Headlines: Problems, Suggestions and Implications

Mahsa Simani Javani*

MA student of translation studies, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Iran

Reza Biria

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Iran

Abstract

Headlines attract the readers to the story because they are the first thing that every one notices. Clearly, translating headlines demands additional skills due to the crucial importance of news genre. Incorrect translations may lead to misinforming the readers. The present study aimed to investigate the importance of recognizing register in translation of political news headlines. For this purpose, 100 political headlines from the Euronews website and their Persian translations were selected. Halliday's (1985) model was used as a theoretical framework. The research was descriptive and consisted of several parts: field, tenor, and mode. Each of which utilized relevant lexicogramatical mechanisms such as the theme, the transitivity, and the mood. After collecting samples, they were compared based on the selected model in order to calculate the frequency of the features observed in English headlines and their Persian translations. Finally, the mismatching in different parts of register and importance of register from the point of equivalence in both languages were analyzed. According to the analysis, ideational themes, material processes, and declarative moods were respectively the most frequent themes, verb processes, and moods used by writers and translators creating headlines.

Keywords: register variables, political news headlines, English and Persian translation, Euronews website

INTRODUCTION

In the era of communications, translation has a significant role to convey information to different communities and definitely news translation demands additional skills due to the crucial importance of this genre. Clearly, incorrect translations lead to misinforming the communities. Headlines encapsulate the story in a minimum number of words, attract the readers to the story and, if they appear on the front page, attract the readers

to the paper (Reah, 1998). Hence headlines translation must be more precise than other parts of press.

People use different linguistic forms on different occasions, also different writers of a language will write the same thing in different ways. Most of these linguistic variations are highly systematic. Writer of a language makes choices in morphology, word choice and grammar depending on a number of non-linguistic factors. These factors include the writer purpose in interaction the relationship between the writer and reader, the production circumstances, and the social characteristics of the writer which have called register. At the highest level, linguistic variation is realized as different language especially in translation (Halliday & Hasan, 1985).

Register is a variety associated with a particular situation of use. The description of a register covers three major components: the situational context, the linguistic features, and the functional relationships between the first two components. Register can be identified and described based on analysis of either complete texts or a collection of text accepts (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). Although all societies and languages have a number of registers, they do not necessarily have equivalent sets. For example, the situational characteristics of face to face conversation in languages are different from the situational characteristic of newspaper articles. Hence, in translation these situational characteristics must be considered.

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976, p. 23), "a text is a passage of discourse which is coherent in these two regards: it is coherent with respect to the context of situation and therefore consistent in register; and it is coherent with respect to itself and therefore cohesive". These two conditions work together to form texture, developing a text with a consistency of register and a text that is interdependent. Therefore, register analysis is an effective tool when deciding if a text is coherent or not. In translation, when meaning is transferred from the ST to the TT any modifications in register causes changes in the language used in order to achieve a coherent text, and consequently an adequate translation (Munday, 2009). However, register analysis as a tool to assess translation quality is a controversial subject as register theory has gone under different revisions.

The context of situation is also termed register and it is constituted by three concepts: *field*, *tenor* and *mode*. These concepts describe how the context of situation determines the kinds of meaning that are expressed in the text (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). These three variables create the basic conditions to achieve communication, developing the register profile of a text (Munday, 2009). The different registers found in texts are defined and identified by these three variables, which are expressed in any text through the three metafunctions of language: interpersonal, textual and ideational (Halliday & Hasan, 1976).

Meaning of the metafunction component in linguistics is what a language expresses about the world we live in or any possible or imaginary world. In functional grammar, lexicogrammar uses different mechanisms for relating metafunctions to register variables. Ideational meaning organizes the speaker's or writer's experience of the real

or imaginary world, for example language refers to real or imagined persons, things, actions, events, states, etc. Textual meaning creates written or spoken texts which cohere within themselves and which fit the particular situation in which they are used. Interpersonal meaning indicates, establishes, or maintains social relationships between people. It includes forms of address, speech function. Halliday (1985) believed meaning is fundamental component of language and each variables of register is associated with a strand of meaning. These strands of meaning together form the discourse semantic. Features related to field and ideational function include lexis, rank hierarchy, clauses, process types: transitivity (relational, material, verbal, mental, existential, and behavioral). Features related to tenor and the interpersonal function involves modality and mood. Features related mode and the textual metafunction are cohesion, theme and thematic development (Halliday & Hasan, 1985).

A. Theme

According to Halliday, theme is the given information serving as “the point of departure a message” (1985, p. 64). It consists of three components: ideational, textual, and interpersonal. Ideational theme falls into five groups including nominal group(Jack and Jill), embedded clause(embedding is a process which allows for the addition of an element to a group from a higher or sometimes lower level unit or rank) , adverbial theme(down jack fell), propositional group(up the hill Jack and Jill went), and compliment theme(his crown he broke). Textual theme has divided into continuative (well, right, ok, now, anyway, of course, etc.), structural (or, and, either, neither, so, etc.), and conjunctive (moreover, furthermore, on the other hand, etc.). As for interpersonal, theme categorizes to vocative (dearly beloved we are gathered here today) and modal (probably, perhaps, in my opinion, etc.) and mood making (wh interrogatives and imperatives).

B. Transitivity

In this theoretical model, the transitivity system (Process, Participants and Circumstances) which "specifies the different types of processes are recognized in the language and the structures by which they are expressed" (Halliday, 1985, p. 101). By definition, the term 'process' refers to the 'goings-on' in reality: doing, happening, being. The entities involved in every process are referred to as 'participants', and 'circumstances' refer to certain conditions associated with a process. Process, 'participant' and 'circumstance' are generally realized as Verb, Noun, and Adjunct, respectively (cf. Halliday, 1985). And, the processes are of the following types: (1) material, (2) mental, (3) relational, (4) verbal, (5) existential, and (6) behavioral (Halliday, 1985, 1994). Material Process or the process of 'doing' involves some physical action and shows that something is going on in the external world. Mental Process, however, indicates that something goes on in the internal world of the mind. This process necessitates the involvement of a conscious participant, i.e., a human agent who is called 'Sensor' and another entity- 'Phenomenon'- which is sensed or experienced. Relational Process, on the other hand, does not involve an action or require some entity to act upon another. Essentially, it is a process of 'being' and is concerned with the

relationship set up between two things or concepts. Verbal Process indicates the process of 'saying' but as Halliday reminds us, "'saying' has to be interpreted in a rather broad sense; it covers any kind of symbolic exchange of meaning" (1985, p. 129). Existential Process shows that something exists or happens. And finally Behavioral Process refers to the process of human physiological and psychological behavior.

C. Mood

According to Halliday (1985), mood is a system through which interpersonal meanings are realized within the conversation. 'The interpersonal metafunction begins with defining basic speech roles: giving information, giving goods-and-services and demanding goods-and-services, respectively called statements, questions and commands' (Halliday, 1994, p. 68). The interpersonal meaning between the speaker and the hearer is expressed by choices between declarative, interrogative and imperative moods. Each mood type is basically associated with an illocutionary act: the declarative expresses a statement, the interrogative a question, the imperative a directive such as a command; and the exclamation is expressed through exclamation marks (Locke, 1996, p. 164-165). 'The exclamation marks have the wh-element, what or how.

Nowadays globalization of media is an increasing trend. Hence, the role of Translation is in the center of attention. Furthermore, press translation reaches a very large number of addressees definitely larger than that of translation of literature and other genres. Certainly a headline is in a position to capture the essence of all events. Some people usually skim over the headlines of news before reading them in detail. With the development of information technology, more and more editors pay more attention to translating English news headlines, as a good headline that will attract more readers. But reviewing the studies of English news headlines translation, the researcher found that scholars both at home and abroad are still faced with many problems, such as how to translate English news headlines precisely, how to choose popular and proper methods to translate English news headlines and so on. In handling the headlines which are the abstract of the story with the function of attracting the addressees, defining the headlines register is significant. However, register analysis has been paid little attention to by the vast translation scholarship in and outside Iran up to the 1990s. The western, or English-language, translation scholarship has long been debating upon the criterion of "equivalence" and the illusory measures of it. Sometimes register equivalence in some translations has not been observed and it has led to misinforming the readers. The variety of languages corresponds to a variety of situations which has been ignored in some headline's translation.

This research may help the field of translation to cope with the news genre to produce a translated text which is so close to effects that ST does in the first language. Additionally, what doubles the significance of this research is its focus on the translation of register in headlines. In fact, news translation is not strictly a matter of interlingual transfer of one text into the other but it also necessitates the radical rewriting and synthesizing of a text to accommodate a completely different set of audience expectations (Bassnett, 2006) and this issue is highlighted when rendering

items are political headlines. Although the importance of register in literary text has been emphasized by many scholars in Iran and abroad, the study of registers of political news headlines is a new research in Iran. Here a brief summary of the most important papers conducted on translation based register equivalence in Iran and abroad is given as follows.

Ventola (1995) carried out a study in which she compared the role of thematic structure in German philosophy texts produced by German authors and their parallel texts in English, their translation. McCabe (1999) compared the thematic patterning in both English and Spanish history textbooks. Williams (2005) performed the analysis of thematic items referring to research and researchers in the discussion section of Spanish Biomedical articles and English-Spanish translation. And applying Halliday's (1994) thematic organization and McCabe's (1999) thematic progression, The obtained results from these studies showed that there were significant differences between the languages in focus concerning how information are introduced in texts especially in case of linear and constant patterns. The main concluding remark taken from these studies is that not only authors but also translators should be vigilant of such cohesive devices as thematic progression in creating more cohesive text. North (2005) compared the degree of textual and interpersonal theme in 50 narratives and scientific text and he found that the number of textual themes in both text is more than the number of interpersonal themes.

According to Sharifi's (2007) results that analyzed an English short story and a novel with their Persian translation in terms of register based equivalence of themes, nominal theme has the highest frequency in both text and both languages. He also, concluded that both languages utilized almost equal percentages of textual themes.

Barzegar (2008) has carried out a study on the differences between Marked and Unmarked Theme. He investigated whether the audiences translated marked thematized sentences in a form of marked or unmarked themes in Persian Having carried out the study, he concluded that there are some differences between marked and unmarked translation of English thematized sentences regarding their effect on the audience. Moreover, Rajab Dorry (2008) explored the relevance of foregrounding in literarily texts. The analysis of the data revealed that, on the one hand, it is significant to keep the marked thematic structure or foregrounding process of the source text in the target text; on the other hand, it is also necessary to make some appropriate alternations because of the differences between the two languages. Generally, it was established that, marked thematic structure or foregrounding, as an important textual features is of special relevance in translation.

Askari (2009) analyzed thematic structure of original English text and their Persian translation in his study. The purpose of his study was to investigate whether the type of themes in sentence in English and their translation in Persian is constant or different. The results have shown that any shift in the theme type may lead to a different message in the target text, which is very different from the source text in terms of cohesion.

Allaei (2010) studied exchange of meaning in humanity science textbooks on the base of Hallidayan systemic functional grammar from the viewpoint of interpersonal metafunction. He was concluded that the authors of these books have just transferred new information by using indicative clauses in high frequency, preventing mutual interaction between writer and reader. In addition, the researcher concluded that the majority of the statements which are made in English and Persian are in the declarative mood. In this research, three textbooks of Samt publication have been selected, so that each of them has been reprinted more than three times and the date of printing is after 2002.

CuiHuiLi (2012) attempted to study Chinese translation of HNHs from the perspective of register theory through quantitative analysis of authentic HNHs (Hard News Headlines), a conclusion was made that register theory is very useful and practical in Chinese translation of English HNHs and it highlights its advantages by taking register equivalence into consideration and achieving the maximum equivalence of Chinese and English HNHs. So the purpose of this study is to determine the frequency of different aspects of register, and the importance of register based equivalence in English and Persian headlines in terms of transitivity, mood, and theme.

METHODOLOGY

Materials

The research design of this study was qualitative and descriptive. Since this study was a descriptive-comparative analysis of a translation through Hallidayan model (1985), the materials consisted of 100 cases of English political headlines of Euronews Website plus their Persian translations in Persian version of the website.

Procedures

In this study, 100 cases of English political headlines from Euronews website and their Persian translation were collected randomly. In fact, a systematic random sampling method was used to collected data. Notably, the samples were chosen from January, February, March, and April in 2015. Among 1000 political headlines, a sample of 100 was targeted, and then, from every ten headlines, one was selected randomly from the main page of Euronews headlines. The unit of analysis in this research was headline. After collecting the samples, the researcher analyzed them with their Persian translations to find out likely variations existing between English and Persian's headlines in terms of register and specifying the corresponding mismatching between SL and TL. Hence this research compared English headlines with their Persian translations based on register variables such as *field*, *tenor*, and *mode*. From the field domain, transitivity; from the tenor domain, mood; and from mode domain, theme were selected for the analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was done at three stages: at the first stage, the selected headlines were analyzed in terms of theme including ideational, textual, and interpersonal. At the second stage, the transitivity and the process types were determined. At the third stage, the mood of each headlines, the source headlines and target headlines was demonstrated. In addition chi-square as a significance test was employed to compare and contrast the obtained frequencies to see the statistically significant differences in each step.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Concerning multiple themes, the frequency and percentage of ideational, textual and interpersonal theme types were calculated and displayed in Table 1. As it is quite clear from Table 1, ideational theme was applied more than textual and interpersonal themes in both English and Persian news headlines. The frequency of different kinds of ideational theme were clarified and compared in both English and Persian languages in Table 2. Ideational theme was analyzed in terms of its theme types (nominal, Embedded, adverbial, Prepositional, and complement) and the results of the frequencies were illustrated in Tables 2. The data analysis illustrated that in ideational theme types with the exception of prepositional and complements themes that not used at all in both English and Persian, nominal was employed more than other groups. Nominal group consists of different nouns (common, proper, and pronoun), adjective, numeral, and determiner. According to Flowerdew (2013) words are classified into ten parts of speech as follows: noun, verb, definite article, indefinite article, adjective, adverb, numeral, conjunction, pronoun, and preposition. As it is clear from the results, among different parts of speech, there were just noun, verb, adjective, adverb, numeral, and conjunction in news headlines. Nouns are one of the most important parts of speech (Lock, 1996) and the frequency of nouns was more than others. Therefore, nominal group had the most frequency. This is in line with Sharifi's (2007) results that analyzed an English short story and a novel with their Persian translation, who concluded that nominal theme, has the most frequency in both text and both languages.

Table1. Frequency and Percentage of Ideational, Textual, and Interpersonal Theme

Themes	English Headlines	Persian Head lines
Ideational	115(95.04%)	109
Textual	5(4.13%)	2
Interpersonal	1(0.82%)	2

Table 2. Frequency of Different Types of Ideational Theme

Ideational Theme	English Headlines	Persian Headlines
Nominal Group	106	102
Embedded Clause	7	0
Adverbial Group	2	7
Prepositional Group	0	0
Complement Group	0	0

Table 3 presents the frequency and chi-square analyses of different kinds of theme used by authors and translators respectively. According to results, none of themes are significant except the ideational theme in which $p=0.04775$. This tells us that there is a statically significant association between English and Persian headlines.

Table 3. Chi-square Analysis of Different Themes

Theme	English Headlines	Persian Headlines	Chi-square	Df	Sig
Ideational	115	109	9.70	4	0.04
Textual	5	2	0.467	2	0.81
Interpersonal	1	2	0.75	2	0.71

Table 4 indicates the whole frequency of equal and unequal themes in both English and Persian translation.

Table 4. Frequency of Equality and Inequality of English and Persian Themes

Theme	Equal	Unequal
Ideational	190	40
Textual	1	8
Interpersonal	0	0

Table 5 presented the number of instances of each process type in English and Persian headlines. Material processes of transitivity are processes of doing, usually physical and tangible actions and admit the writer's materialistic point of view (Halliday, 1985). As findings made it clear, material process has the highest frequency of six in both languages. This indicates that the news genre is principally concerned with representing actions and events and participants involved in them.

The second most frequently used process type in both English and Persian headlines is the verbal, which represents the art of saying and its synonyms. One of its synonyms that was used, is colon (:). Colon was used to replace the word "say(s)". It consisted of one and nine examples in English and Persian respectively. The relational process type includes all those processes concerned with the expression of 'being'. It has the third place of six in both languages. As Halliday remarked, "more than any other process types, the relational have a rich potential for ambiguity" (Halliday & Hasan, 2004, p. 247). So the frequency of this group is fewer than two former groups.

The number of mental processes is even fewer than relational processes. Mental processes usually encode mental reactions such as perception, thoughts and feelings. Mental processes give an insight into people's consciousness and how they sense the experience of the reality. They approve the mental interactions of the characters and even the interactions between characters and themselves and sort of stand in opposite direction toward the material processes (Halliday, 1985). So, fall in one causes a raise in another. As can be seen form the results, mental process has the forth place of six in English news headlines. Since the Persian news headlines have used more material process, there is less room for mental process which presents the logical and emotional

actions. So, decrease of mental process in Persian news headlines is reasonable. As manifested in Table 6, there was no equality for mental process in translation into Persian. This is in line with Samimi's (2013) results. In his paper, the researcher chose "Uncle Willy" by William Faulkner and analyzed its transitivity patterns. The results have shown that the translator has emphasized the writer's materialistic point of view and has decreased the relational interactions between the characters of the story in the interests of their mental actions.

Table 5. Frequency of Different Types of Transitive Verbs

Verb Processes	English Headlines	Persian Headlines
Material	94	40
*Verbal	22	16
Mental	4	0
Relational	7	7
Existential	0	1
Behavioral	1	1
Total verbs	128	65

*among verbal processes, one verb in English headlines and nine verbs in Persian headlines have used Colon (:) to replace the word "say(s)".

Table 6. Frequency of Equality and Inequality of English and Persian Verbs in Terms of Transitivity

Verb Processes	Equal	Unequal
Material	37	57
*Verbal	11	11
Mental	0	4
Relational	1	6
Existential	0	0
Behavioral	1	0

*among all equal verbs in verbal process, in five headlines Colon (:) were used instead of the verb "say(s)".

Table 7 was drawn to show the frequency of phrases in both English and Persian headlines. The figure in the table indicates that most of the headlines in English were rendered into the phrase in Euornews website.

Table 7. Frequency of Phrases

Headlines	English Headlines	Persian headlines
Phrase	4	47

According to the results, all of the samples in English and Persian headlines expressed indicative mood or in other words, declarative mood. Surprisingly, it is observed from the data that no tokens were found for interrogative and exclamative mood types in the selected corpus. Imperative mood is the last group of moods that did not exist in both English and Persian headlines. It indicated that in both languages, writers and

translators have not intended to add question, command or request, and exclamations to their headlines.

CONCLUSION

This study was an attempt to examine three aspect register (themes, verb processes, and moods) in English political headlines and their Persian translations. According to the results presented in last chapter, concluded that in order to achieve accurate transmission, register of the headlines in terms of theme and mood should be recognized and translated with the same group. As it can be seen from the results, where themes of headlines have been altered in Persian translations, their meaning have changed as well. The findings of revealed that, of three kinds of theme, ideational themes have the highest frequent themes in both English and Persian political headlines of Euronews website. Based on what mentioned in previous sections, mood equivalence that related to the tenor is very important in headline translation. The main cause of it, is Persian translators of Euronews website have correct transferring of mod from English to Persian.

After analyzing both languages based transitivity, it was revealed that headlines with hidden verbs should be translated with the same structure in order to prevent mismatches, however, Euronews agency preferred to translate the sentences into phrases. This change is acceptable under the condition that the register of the original headlines in terms of theme and mood is transmitted to the target language.

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